Harold Weisberg
Rt. 8, Frederick, Md. 21701
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Dear Mr. Trumbo,

Late one of the nights of your appearance before the House Un-American Committee I answered a knock at my Arlington, Va., home and found Dmytryk there with a man with whom I had worked as a Senate investigator, Charles Kramer. Kramer came right to the point when I invited them in: you wanted help against the committee.

I could and did supply (plural) it, whatever they wanted of literally thousands of hours of research for what would have been the first book exposing the UnAmericans, including what I needed for my own protection. I have never seen any of this precious material since, never heard from Kramer or Dmytryk, and the book was no longer possible. If I recall Dmytryk's subsequent history correctly, I presume this is all new to you. He finked. Your group did not fight as I urged, and the rest is history.

You could have won. I had a tougher fight and did. They passed a law still on the books to get me and an associate now dead, convoked a special grand jury to indict me, held up the appointment of the U.S.Attorney for the District of Columbia to insure indictment. Although still a brash kid, I took the grand jury away from the prosecution and did what I think has not since been duplicated, forced the indictment of a committee agent. Dies was forced to cop a plea for him.

Like you, before this I was what came to be called a premature anti-fascist. I learned very young - before I was old enough to cast my first vote - that the weak survive the powerful only by never defending, by attacking. I never defended myself against Dies. I kept attacking him. The committee has never dared print my testimony. In order to fight the only way I could avoid suffering your fate I had to fight my associate, a man old enough to be my father, an experienced and competent lobbyist, without compromising his connections with the trade-union movement; our Establoshmentarian lawyer; the wily prosecutor, who kept leaking to my friend and lawyer what I was doing in about a week of grilling by the prosecutor and the overtly reactionary members of the grand jury; and the powerful forces of whom Dies was but one. In the end, this prosecutor, later chief war-crimes prosecutor, had so much respect for me that he gave me copies of those grand-jury minutes against me by others, including Dies, that I might in the future need.

So, I introduce myself by telling you what might indicate that you suffered more than you need have. I think you did. I think you could have won.

The cost of that night to me was much more than the loss of the enormous effort that went into the research for the book. I soon lost my job. I was then news and special-events director of a radio station owned by a friend who was much in my debt. He had been editor of a magazine for which, prior to Pearl Harbor, I had been Washington correspondent. He had had the courage to print the definitive investigations I did on Nazi cartels and related espionage. (Some was so hot that nobody would touch it.) When he was fired for it - big corporations always had this kind of influence and I hurt many of them - I got him a good job in Washington. During World War II, when I wound up in OSS, I was assigned to him there. (And my last assignment before medical discharge and rehiring as a civilian consultant, was cribbed and appeared as the movie OSS, in which Cagney starred.)

Prior to Dmytryk's visit I had survived Dies and a pogrom inside the State Department to which I had been transferred on the splitting of OSS, the other part becoming CIA. You may remember that incident. It was the first of the major "security" cases, in which 10 people were fired for no given reason. All but two of us were Jews. One was married to a Jew and the other was a case of mistaken identity. All were over-educated intellectuals who immediately looked for ways to run. I drew a majority together, arranged free counsel (the late Thurman Arnold and Abe Fortas) and by fighting the right way, again won. When I could be employable after this history yet lost employment with a friend after trying to help you and your fellow victims, it seemed obvious that I could no longer exist employed by others. This brought about a major change in my life that I think could make a good book and a movie, a combination of The Egg and I and Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House. I decided to become a farmer, in the thought that farming, at least, would not be subject to political pressures. My wife and I became world-famous as farmers. Then our

farming, of all impossible things, was ruined by the military, leading to a precedent lawsuit I believe was used in the recent Los Angeles Airport lawsuit. I decided to return to writing, was writing a book about what had happened to us, when John Kennedy was assassinated, and that, too, made a major change in our lives.

All of this, for the first time in years, came back to me after I met Anthony Quinn at the American Booksellers' Association convention this past June and he gave me a publisher's promo of two chapters of his book. In them he aludes to this period and to the Scottsboro Case, that inaccurately. I knew about it from having taken in the man who was really responsible for the Scottsboro defense, Louis Colman, a former writer who was working for the International Labor Defense on behalf of political victims. Colman's pay was $15.00 a week, so I invited him to live with me.

I wrote Quinn's publisher about the factual error so it could be corrected, wrote Quinn separately, was told by his editor that my letter was being forwarded to him, and I have heard nothing from him since.

This, by the way, is not a "touch" letter. Because it may so easily be misinterpreted, it is not easy to write.

When the military ruined our farming and with it my wife's health, when a courtroom victory and the later effort of the Secretary of Defense himself could not end it, I had to liquidate the farming. I got an agent in New York, had a handshake deal with a publisher for a book that he and the agent thought would make a movie, and then JFK was assassinated. From my investigative and political-analysis experience in intelligence, some things were obvious probabilities to me. I sent my agent a lead and summary and promptly lost my agent in a wildly hysterical reaction. It turned out to be valid: nothing other than sycophancy was publishable. The next six agents I approached would not touch the subject of assassinations. I became my own, got a contract for a book, completed it 2/15/64, the first book on the assassination and the Warren Commission, and while the publisher was still drooling into the till, telling me that without advertising the salesmen had advance orders for about 25,000 copies, he broke the contract. He didn't even return the manuscript. I had to reconstruct it. I'd written in such haste that I did not have complete carbons of all of it.

I digress for what might amuse you. In the course of acting as my own agent after this, I made what seemed like a firm arrangement with the Saturday Evening Post for chapter use of parts of the book, which is titled WHITEWASH: THE REPORT ON THE WARREN REPORT. The Post said it preferred dealing with an agent, arranged for Max Wilkinson, of Littauer & Wilkinson to represent me, and in a matter of weeks the deal was off, according to Wilkinson. This baffled me until The Watergate Caper. A history with revanchist Cubans prompted an interest in it. The most superficial inquiry showed that roughly coinciding with my going to Littauer & Wilkinson, E. Howard Hunt, then working for CIA, also became associated with them. WHITEWASH, as did the lead and summary, said Oswald had to have been intelligence. Because all of this must sound paranoid, I attach a photocopy of Hunt's biography from Who's Who for 1964-5, marked. I can supply my notes of meetings and correspeondence with the agency. Under a variety of aliases, Hunt makes the same representation, as in Contemporary Authors. He was with CIA, engaged in domestic intelligence, until the last half of 1970.

Ultimately, I was forced to print WHITEWASH myself. I think I invented the "underground" book to do it. It became a best-seller in that format and in reprint. Between eliminating the need for commercial publishers, making a success of what more than 60 publishers refused to publish after favorable editorial assessments, and persisting on a subject about which the government was really uptight, I brought down upon myself a powerful curse. I am as close as one can be to unpublishable.

The net result has been virtual bankruptcy and no prospect at all. I have been cheated out of large sums by publishers and wholesalers and am without the means of hiring lawyers to do anything about it. I have copies of editions in reprint never accounted for, for one example. Mail fraud is commonplace. The Post Office has agreed, has taken one of the cases, and has fallen silent. They won't even tell me to indulge in sexual self-satisfaction. And to complicate it a bit more, I have had the temerity to sue and beat the FBI and the Department of Justice. I even got a summary judgement against them in one case, dealing with the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., another tabu.

on this), about $35,000 in debt, have an expectable income of about $2,000 a year, earned by my wife in part-time employment (this is about 4/5ths of what it takes to service my debt), and continue to do the commercially and politically unpopular work I began when JFK was killed. Most of the non-Orwellian work on the subject has been done by irresponsibles, another handicap. However, I have preserved a reputation for integrity in it and have developed sources in what is regarded as "the other side", including a fair number of local and federal officials, former FBI agents, prosecutors, experts, etc. As a result I have what was withheld from the Warren Commission, the most significant of which is not verbal but official documents that were suppressed. Nothing was obtained clandestinely. My files include, I would estimate, perhaps 15,000 pages of FBI reports. There are at least 2,000 of them I've not yet had time to read. (Until recently I worked a 20-hour day, but I now try to sleep about six hours.) If a man personally and emotionally involved in his own work can offer a dispassionate appraisal of it, I'd say you would be hard-put to find another of its magnitude. My office holds 10 file cabinets, all full, and there is enormous overflow in my basement. This does not count my earlier work, anti-fascist investigation before and after Pearl Harbor. It contains official evidence that would not be credited in a novel. It is, I think, the most definitive study of the workings of federal spooks, including but not limited to the FBI. (I have carbons of CIA surveillance of me, to cite another example.)

What I am trying to represent is between 35,000 and 40,000 hours of work and its yield. I think your own experience permits you to translate this into normal working periods. In these terms it equals about 20 years of work.

Aside from the politically-unwelcome JFK assassination, in the course of this work I have developed what might easily make 20 socially-useful books, several with movie potential. As I age and realize I'll never be able to write them, whether or not from me they can be publishable, I have started to give some away. I gave one to a black writer who promptly lost his public-relations job with Eastern Airlines in New York. If you think this is paranoid, I'll send you the tape of his telling me what happened to him. Another to the wife of a senior Bantam editor. If you doubt this, call Walter Glanze at Bantam in New York, 765-6500. Still another can make an updated Citizen Kane, about a much richer man than Hearst and from his former chief of security, a former FBI agent. Like this, several of the non-fiction properties lend themselves to fictional treatment. At least one might make a TV series, of the anti-cop, handled like Archie Bunker. This guy is real and a friend, the most honest crook I've ever met. Most of those books are topical today.

But I can't do anything with them. I would like to be able to, in part, of course, to be able to survive and continue with the work that I alone am doing today, work I regard, rightly or wrongly, as important in any kind of decent society. All of these properties not part of my work on the assassinations and their consequences are, I believe, in themselves, worthwhile endeavors that can either help make a better society or help deter the increasing authoritarianism I foresaw years ago and have tried to combat.

In a sense, I am in something like the position in which you were at the time of the opening of this letter, but with considerably less literary talent. The unique thing you were able to do is beyond my duplication.

So, I write in the hope that you may be able to and willing to help in whatever ways you can. Not for a touch or financial help of any kind but for assistance with what I think is worthwhile in today's world and can make its own way. I have enough to keep a crew of young writers going for years. I'd like to be able to keep going myself.

I can't ask you to invite me out there so I can discuss these things with you because I can't think of paying for the trip and there is no longer interest on the campuses in my work, hence no speaking engagements. I have not begun to encapsulate the past that might interest you for other than literary purposes. Example: how I broke up the neo-fascist Senate investigation of the movie industry in World War II, by a Senator who had been a friend (possible because of unpaid promotional work I'd earlier done to help the movie Confessions of a Nazi Spy). Nor have I encompassed the full sweep of my recent work, of which one illustration is my confidential relationship with James Earl Ray. I have dozens of hours of taped interviews with him, members of his family and former associates, several, like him, interviewed inside maximum-security jails. A book-length babeas corpus petition

filed in his behalf 12/4/72 is [illegible]
Without having ever met or corresponded with him, I was able to get him to ask a lawyer I trusted to represent him after Percy Foreman put him away. When this friend turned out to be both irresponsible and disspirited, a young lawyer who has yet to have his first client or his first case and I did the entire job. The literary rights remain mine, aside from what becomes public domain in court. My correspondence with James Ray is book-length. (This, by the way, is work entailing some personal danger, for I have learned just about everything except who pulled the trigger and by whom he was paid. Ordinarily I ignore threats, and I have received some sophisticated one, like the playing of the soundtrack of Shane to me by phone at 2:30 a.m. In this case, especially because of my circumstances, I suspended investigation at this point.) Just today I got a letter from a man framed because of his earlier association with James. I enclose a copy, again to establish my bona fides in what must seem egotistical or paranoid, and in confidence. I think what happened to him could make a book, perhaps a movie. I have it all in his writing and on tape. I interviewed him inside Leavenworth this past May. The Larry in his letter is Larry Finley, of the Chicago Daily News (312/321-2121). John is James' brother, also framed, also in Leavenworth.

Please do not assume that I open this letter with reference to my efforts to help you and your associates when you were in distress because I consider that you owe me something. That was not my purpose and it is not my feeling. If I can take time to help habitual criminals when they become victims of official corruption because of the principle involved, it should be obvious that in a case like yours, without criminal taint and of political motive, neither then nor now did or do I believe that victims are in any way indebted to any who might try to help. I would, in fact, argue that such help is selfish, the way a man justifies his life.

You are, today, a bit older than I. You have your own life and its demands and desires, perhaps your own work and your own problems. As of the last time I saw you on TV, I think with Cavett, you seemed vigorous and energetic enough. But I know how the years wear one, having lived 60 of them pretty fully. If you can do nothing, I can understand it, and you owe me no explanations, either.

I close with a suggestion I hope you will not regard as a mouse's arrogance toward a giant. I am one of your early admirers. I think the time is propitious for trying to do with The Remarkable Andrew what you have done with such success with Johnny Got His Gun. Today's teen-agers and young adults need it as I needed it and other great work of that era (not all by men who have preserved their integrity, my curt bow and swirling cape to you!) when I was in those years.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg